

CATFISH PROCESSING



**USDA/NASS
ARKANSAS
FIELD OFFICE**

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**USDA/NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE**

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Catfish Processing Down 5 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during December 2005 totaled 45.7 million pounds round weight, down 5 percent from December 2004. The average price paid to producers was 72.6 cents per pound for December 2005, up 0.2 cent from last month and 3.6 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during December 2005 totaled 21.8 million pounds, down 4 percent from the comparable month in 2004. Total end of the month inventory increased 7 percent from last month but was down 10 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 7.89 million pounds, were down 1 percent from December 2004 and represented 36 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 13.9 million pounds, were down 6 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 64 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 17 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 60 percent, and the remaining 23 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The December 2005 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.23 per pound, an increase of 1 cent from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.50 per pound, down 7 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 7 cents at \$2.84 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.26 per pound, up 2 cents from December 2004. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 5 cents at \$2.01, and frozen fillets at \$2.66 per pound were up 4 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, *Ictalurus*, *Pangasius* and *Siluriformes* catfish fillets for November 2005 totaled 4.65 million pounds, almost 3 times above the amount imported last year. Fifty-two percent of all imports were from Vietnam with the remainder coming from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The *Ictalurus* (channel catfish) imports totaled 426 thousand pounds.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for November 2005 totaled 15.9 thousand pounds, of which 3.51 thousand pounds went to Canada. Fresh fillet exports totaled 111 thousand pounds, with 33.1 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest to Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Venezuela.

Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed by Major Processors,
United States, 2004-2005**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year	Cumulative		
	2004	2005		2004	2005	
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	53,849	53,856	100	53,849	53,856	100
Feb	54,173	51,720	95	108,022	105,576	98
Mar	60,272	57,117	95	168,294	162,693	97
Apr	53,896	50,306	93	222,190	212,999	96
May	52,324	51,552	99	274,514	264,551	96
Jun	50,155	49,626	99	324,669	314,177	97
Jul	51,055	47,241	93	375,724	361,418	96
Aug	53,295	50,686	95	429,019	412,104	96
Sep	51,329	47,151	92	480,348	459,255	96
Oct	52,396	49,034	94	532,744	508,289	95
Nov	49,536	46,674	94	582,280	554,963	95
Dec	48,170	45,707	95	630,450	600,670	95

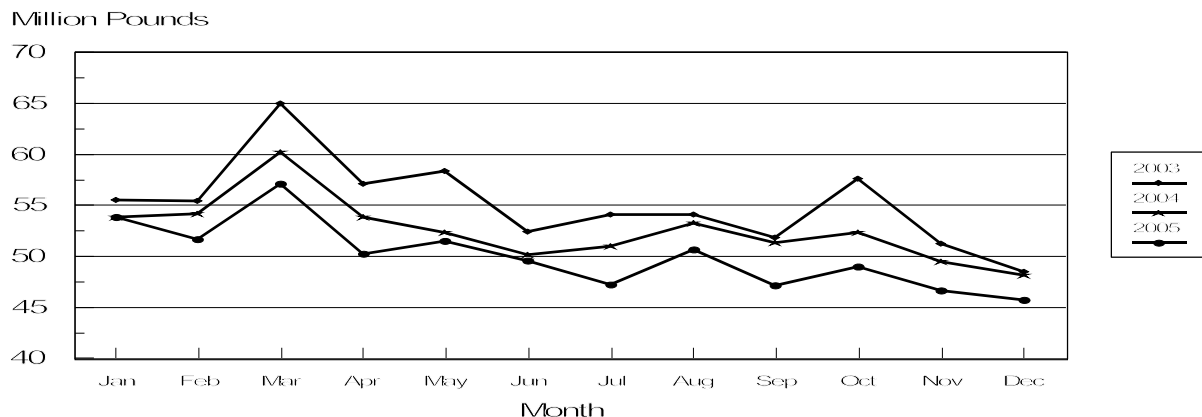
**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors
and Imports, United States, 2004-2005**

Month	Price per Pound ¹		Change from Previous Year	Imports ²		Percent of Previous Year
	2004	2005		2004	2005	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	0.668	0.725	0.057	215	1,383	643
Feb	0.703	0.731	0.028	204	1,230	603
Mar	0.723	0.733	0.010	295	1,161	394
Apr	0.728	0.725	-0.003	328	2,198	670
May	0.720	0.722	0.002	248	2,695	1,087
Jun	0.689	0.721	0.032	270	2,538	940
Jul	0.682	0.723	0.041	123	2,048	1,665
Aug	0.683	0.724	0.041	1,637	2,684	164
Sep	0.683	0.724	0.041	1,801	2,219	123
Oct	0.695	0.724	0.029	1,104	4,062	368
Nov	0.689	0.724	0.035	1,579	4,648	294
Dec	0.690	0.726	0.036	1,420		

¹ Price for fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

² Pounds of frozen boneless fillets. Includes Ictalurus, Pangasius and Siluriformes catfish. Data furnished by U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Catfish Processed
United States 2003-2005**



**Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending
Inventory, United States, December 2004-2005**

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	807	1,404	1.04	1.12	*	*
Whole Dressed	1,897	1,380	1.77	1.81	*	*
Total	2,704	2,784	1.57	1.50	120	90
Other						
Steaks	84	74	2.12	2.14	*	*
Nuggets	776	678	1.27	1.28	92	86
Other ¹	235	148	3.01	3.10	*	*
Total	1,095	900	1.71	1.65	98	89
Fillets ²	4,162	4,209	2.77	2.84	357	372
Total Fresh	7,961	7,893	2.22	2.23	575	551
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	979	1,012	1.96	2.01	685	831
Other						
Steaks	107	93	1.92	2.01	123	114
Nuggets	3,068	2,746	0.96	0.92	1,575	1,667
Other ¹	1,061	1,141	2.78	2.60	971	1,202
Total	4,236	3,980	1.44	1.43	2,669	2,983
Fillets ²	9,545	8,940	2.62	2.66	11,243	9,342
Total Frozen	14,760	13,932	2.24	2.26	14,597	13,156
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	807	1,404	1.04	1.12	*	*
Whole Dressed	2,876	2,392	1.83	1.89	*	*
Total	3,683	3,796	1.67	1.63	805	921
Other						
Steaks	191	167	2.01	2.07	*	*
Nuggets	3,844	3,424	1.02	0.99	1,667	1,753
Other ¹	1,296	1,289	2.82	2.66	*	*
Total	5,331	4,880	1.50	1.47	2,767	3,072
Fillets ²	13,707	13,149	2.67	2.72	11,600	9,714
Total Fresh & Frozen	22,721	21,825	2.23	2.25	15,172	13,707

* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

¹ Includes all products not already reported including weight of breading and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

Catfish Processing Estimates

Survey Procedures: Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 21 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by NASS Headquarter's staff in Washington, D.C. NASS field offices, however, are responsible for keeping Headquarters informed of any new processing operations in their state to ensure that the survey coverage is as complete as possible. Processors are contacted either by mail or telephone. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

Estimation Procedures: The "**Catfish Processing**" report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild capture fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 5 of this release. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price.

If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved. Generally, individual items are not published if there are less than three plants reporting, or if any one plant has 60 percent or more of the total.

One unique feature of the "**Catfish Processing**" report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Import and export data for frozen catfish fillets, which are compiled by the Department of Commerce, are also included in this report.

Reliability: Catfish processing estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Revision Policy: Revisions may be necessary following a review of late reports received from plants. Revisions of less than 2 percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.